



Director of Central Intelligence

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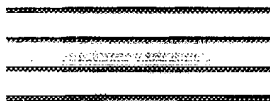


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SOUTH ASIA (continued)

Afghanistan:

Rabbani's Government Under Siege

Military pressure from the resurgent Taliban movement and its own growing isolation are threatening the Rabbani government's survival. The regime's offensives against opposition leaders Dostam and Hikmatyar have stalled; it now controls only Kabul and a couple of provinces in the northeast. Taliban's capture of Herat deprives the government of a primary source of military supplies, particularly fuel, *and aid from abroad will be hard to come by.*

- On Friday, the opposition Supreme Coordination Council threatened to intercept cargo or passenger aircraft that do not seek its permission to enter Afghan airspace, according to press reports.
- Taliban continues to resist Russian negotiators over a chartered Russian aircraft and crew it seized last month while they were trying to deliver ammunition to Kabul, press reports say.

The government has a strong position in Kabul, however, and will not be easy to dislodge if Rabbani can hold his coalition together and keep commanders from defecting. [] [] dissension between Rabbani's Islamic activist supporters and technocrats in the bureaucracy who are alarmed by the growing influence of the activists, and key commanders in Kabul are divided on which faction to support.

- *In the past, threats from outside have tended to encourage these elements to cooperate, and Taliban's successes, apparently including the recent ones, have owed more to its ability to suborn enemy commanders than to its fighting prowess. It would be no match for the regime's seasoned troops in a pitched battle for the capital.* []

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